

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251586
Site Address:	8 Culver Lane, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1DS
Expiry Date:	4 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	30 July 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a 1-bedroom detached dwelling within the curtilage land along with associated access, parking and bin storage plus new crossover, dropped kerb following demolition of existing detached garage and conservatory to No 8, Culver Lane and new crossover onto Culver Lane.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS10 – Meeting our housing needs SS14 – Sites allocated for residential development, including residential as part of mixed use development

Update (LPU)	CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C3 – Active travel C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H3 – Affordable housing H6 – Self-build and custom build H8 – Conversion and sub-division of buildings H12 – Residential development of existing private gardens FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design NE6 – Valued landscapes NE7 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC1 – Promoting healthy communities HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
080906	Proposed raising of roof with dormer extensions to create first floor living accommodation plus erection of two storey side/side extension to dwelling.	Refused 13/11/2008
081712	Proposed creation of first floor to provide additional living accommodation, plus raising of roof.	Refused 01/07/2008
150016	Householder Application for proposed raising and changing of roof form to provide additional habitable accommodation with front and rear dormer extensions. Erection of single storey	Approved 18/09/2015

	outbuilding & provision of 2 x car parking spaces.Demolition of existing outbuilding.	
182765	Full planning application for the demolition of existing bungalow and erection of a two storey dwelling.	Refused 23/05/2019
212288	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. 4 bedroom dwelling and detached garage, following demolition of existing dwelling and garage, plus new vehicular access.	Approved 08/09/2021
214106	Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8.00m, for which the maximum height would be 3.00m and the height of the eaves 3.00m.	Prior approval not available 05/01/2022
220050	Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8.00m, for which the maximum height would be 3.00m and the height of the eaves 3.00m.	Prior approval not required 03/02/2022
220650	Full application for the proposed demolition of the existing bungalow/single garage and the erection of a new two storey 4 No. bedroom detached dwelling with double garage and new cross over from Culver Lane.	Approved 06/04/2022

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – Recommend approval with no conditions
WBC Drainage – Request further information before determination
WBC Highways – Request further information before determination
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objection
WBC Ecology – No objection
WBC Waste Services – No comments received

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	One Councillor has commented on this application. They find that the new dwelling is far too close to the neighbouring boundary lines (less than 1m gap). They also find the proposal to be out of keeping with the area with adverse impacts upon neighbouring properties, as well as it being excessive development in the area.

	The Councillor also requested the application be listed for planning committee if it is being recommended for approval.
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located on the southern side of Culver Lane in a predominantly residential area of Earley. The site is located on a prominent corner plot where Culver Lane meets Anderson Avenue, it is currently screened by a tall hedge that covers a large section of the site's boundary with Anderson Avenue. The existing dwelling is a detached bungalow that has off-street parking and a private garden space. Additionally, there is an existing detached single storey garage building to be demolished.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission for the proposed subdivision of the site and the erection of 1x 1-bedroom single storey detached bungalow with front and rear dormers, which makes the property 1.5 stories. This follows the demolition of the existing single storey detached garage building and the removal of the existing conservatory from the host dwelling. Plus, a new crossover / dropped kerb to serve the new dwelling on Anderson Avenue, and a new crossover / dropped kerb on Culver Lane to serve the host dwelling.

Principle of Development:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (CS) 2010 and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan 2014. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be considered as it constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority must pay regard to, however it does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making. However, the NPPF is a material consideration in any determination and must be read alongside the Development Plan.

Development Plan

The spatial strategy for the borough is contained within the Core Strategy. Policy CP9 'Scale and location of development proposals' of the Core Strategy relates to the scale and location of development proposals and seeks to focus development proposals within those identified major or modest development locations.

CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. The site is located within a major development location and as such the principle of development should be acceptable subject to other material considerations. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF is a material consideration in the decision-making process. The NPPF outlines the Government's planning policy on a national level and highlights sustainable development as the centre of the decision-making process incorporating economic, social and environmental objectives. These three objectives seek to balance growth and local community needs against the protection of the natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF also states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making.

Housing Land Supply

To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF requires LPAs to identify a four-year or five-year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet housing needs. Circumstances have recently changed with the Council currently only able to demonstrate that it has 2.5 years' worth of deliverable sites, rather than a five-year supply as required by the NPPF. Subsequently, the Local Development Plan is considered out of date in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Paragraph 11 states that where policies which are most important for determining an application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect area or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Firstly, in considering i), it must be recognised that the proposed development is located within settlement limits, being located within the Major Development Location of Earley. When considering the proposal under ii), it must be determined as to whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is referred to as the 'tilted balance', as harms and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted against any adverse impacts. The tilted balance required by paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF will be given in the 'Planning Balance' section of this response letter.

Sustainability:

Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the CS permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport.

In this instance, the site is located within settlement limits within a major development location and is acceptable in terms of the principles stated in the Core Strategy. It also accords with the relevant policies in the MDD Local Plan. The site is located less than 200m (a 2-minute walk) from the nearest convenience store. Additionally, there is one

bus route within a 3-minute walk serving Woodley and Reading, that runs hourly, and there is another bus stop to the west within a 7-minute walk that serves Reading and Bracknell which runs every 15 minutes. On this basis, there are no sustainability concerns with the proposal.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan states that 'The Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. Point 2 of Policy TB06 goes on to say that proposals should make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of the relationship of the existing built form, compatibility with general building height within the area, and should be of an adequate size to accommodate the development in terms of the setting, spacing around buildings and the amenity space provided. This is supported by R22 of the Design Guide which expands on the requirements of TB06 and focus on the harm to the character of the area; suitability/size of plots/ overlooking and contribution to the pattern of development in the area.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

In terms of layout and siting, the proposal is contrived and fails to reflect local character. The proposed new dwelling is set approximately 14.5 metres away from the host dwelling on site, and in terms of the street scene, the new dwelling is in line with those along Anderson Avenue. Whilst the dwelling on site is a bungalow, the dwellings along Anderson Avenue to the south of the application site are two-storey dwellings. Therefore, it is not deemed that the proposed 1.5 storey dwelling would match the existing style of dwellings in the area, and it would be in conflict with the character of the area.

The proposed new dwelling would be sited in close proximity to the site's southern and eastern boundaries, being 0.6 metres from the boundary with no. 1 Anderson Avenue and 0.7 metres from the boundary with no. 10 Culver Lane. Along Anderson Avenue, the houses at the northern end of the road nearest the application site (nos. 1, 3, 5 & 7) benefit from a clear separation between the bulk and mass of the properties as shown below in Figure 1. Guidance in the Borough Design Guide requires a separation distance of at least 1 metre from the flank wall to the boundary for new housing. The 0.6 metre separation would not comply with this guidance, and it would create a stark contrast to the existing separation between dwellings along this section of Anderson Avenue. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan.



Figure 1: Screenshot from Google Earth showing separation between houses along Anderson Avenue.

Whilst the dwelling proposed has been described as a single storey detached bungalow, its dormers and additional bulk, make it appear much larger than a typical bungalow. The dormers have been designed to maximise the loft space of the dwelling, with one of the front dormers being near the full height of the roof slope, and the rear dormer adding significant bulk to the rear elevation. The front dormers differ in height, and this makes the front elevation appear convoluted and unbalanced. Additionally, no other dwellings along this section of Anderson Avenue have front facing dormers. The development is not deemed to be appropriate in terms of the built form, scale, mass and height, and it therefore conflicts with Policy CP3.

The subdivision of the plot and the proposed new dwelling is squeezing development into a space that is not of an adequate size to accommodate a dwelling and therefore it conflicts with the relevant policies listed above. The size, scale and footprint of the proposed dwelling is not in keeping with the average size of dwellings in the surrounding area and does not relate well to the character of the dwellings in the streetscene. A new dwelling here would appear cramped and this would impact upon the quality of the environment contrary to Policy CP1.

Overall, the proposal would result in a convoluted and cramped form of development that fails to reflect the local character. By virtue of its mass, built form, spacing to boundaries and convoluted design, the proposal fails to respect the character of the area contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan, and the Borough Design Guide.

The above concerns give rise to the 1st reason for refusal.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Impact on no. 1 Anderson Avenue

The proposed new dwelling would be sited 0.6 metres from the boundary with no. 1 Anderson Avenue. The dwelling would not project forwards or backwards of the building line of no. 1, and therefore it is not considered that the dwelling would have any overbearing impacts or cause a loss of light. In terms of overlooking, no windows are proposed on the side elevation facing no. 1, and therefore there are no concerns on these grounds. Overall, the proposal would have no impact on no. 1 Anderson Avenue.

Impact on no. 10 Culver Lane

The proposed dwelling is located 0.7 metres from the boundary with no. 10 Culver Lane, and this does not meet the 1 metre separation distance advocated within the BDG in order to limit a sense of enclosure. The siting of the dwelling so close to the boundary would likely have a significant overbearing impact upon the private amenity space of no. 10 by virtue of the bulky dormer design on the rear elevation, which would resemble a similar situation to a two-storey high wall. Whilst the proposed dwelling would be overbearing and creating a sense of enclosure, it is not considered that it would cause an unacceptable loss of light to no. 10. In terms of overlooking, the first-floor rear windows would look across the bottom of no. 10's rear garden and the outbuilding. The bedroom window would mainly have an outlook over the outbuilding, and there would only be obscure views towards the private rear amenity space of no. 10. Any overlooking would therefore likely be limited, especially if the bathroom window were to be obscure glazed which it likely would be, however, there would be a high degree of perceived overlooking which would impact upon the privacy that no. 10 currently benefits from.

The above concerns give rise to the 2nd reason for refusal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer is satisfied that the traffic generated from one new dwelling will not have any significant impact upon the local highway network.

In terms of the proposed accesses, the existing dwelling will be accessed via a new access onto Culver Lane, which the driveway and visibility splays were approved under application 220650. However, this permission is now expired, but it demonstrates that the proposed visibility splays are acceptable in principle. For the new dwelling, the existing access on Anderson Avenue is proposed to be widened. Highways have advised that any new or extended dropped crossing would require separate consent from the Traffic Management team.

The level of parking proposed meets WBC Parking Standards, and this is considered acceptable.

The Council's Highways Officer did request an amended plan indicating the location of an EV Charging Point for the new dwelling and cycle parking for both dwellings. However, as the application is recommended for refusal, this was not considered necessary to pursue.

Housing Amenity:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD (BDG) require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. Technical housing standards are the nationally described space standards that set out the requirement for the Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. According to the Technical housing standards, a 1 bedroom, 2-person dwelling, would require a GIA of 50m² for a single storey dwelling and 58m² for a 2-storey dwelling. Excluding the stairwell, the proposed dwelling has a GIA of approximately 58m², and therefore the dwelling complies with the technical housing standards and provides an acceptable level of living accommodation for the occupiers. It is also considered that the level of fenestration proposed is acceptable and it would provide adequate levels of natural light to the dwelling.

External Amenity:

R16 of the Borough Design Guide states that, “new housing must provide easy access to some form of amenity space”. Following the subdivision of the site, the existing dwelling would retain a private garden size of approximately 12.2m x 9.4m, and this would be adequate to serve the size of the dwelling. The proposed dwelling would benefit from a private garden size of approximately 12.2m x 4.9m and given that the proposed dwelling is smaller than the existing, it is deemed that this external amenity space would be appropriate. However, the spacing to the boundary as stated above is unacceptable, and this is what allows for the appropriate garden size. Even though the garden size may be appropriate, the site is too cramped to feature a new dwelling.

Flooding and Drainage:

Whilst the site appears to lie within Flood Zone 1, which indicates a low probability of fluvial flooding, consideration should still be given to surface water flood risk, especially due to the proposed intensification of development on a residential plot and associated impermeable area increase.

No drainage strategy has been submitted with this application and the Council's Drainage Officer has requested that a detailed surface water drainage strategy is provided in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and local policies. The Drainage Officer also requested that the applicant demonstrates that there is no increase in flood risk on or off site as a result of the proposed works, and asked that a SuDS maintenance plan be provided to confirm how drainage systems would be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development. However, as the application is recommended for refusal, this was not considered necessary to pursue.

Planning Balance:

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that achieving sustainable development means that development should satisfy three overarching objectives in relation to economic, social and environmental benefits.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where a local authority is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies relating to the application may be viewed as being out of date. It continues to advise that unless there are specific policies in the NPPF protecting the land subject to the application, that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would

significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF (tilted balance).

In considering the weight to be attached to the various benefits and adverse impacts of a proposed development under the NPPF and the development plan, any planning application must be considered in context.

Residential development in this location is considered acceptable in principle as the site is located within settlement limits, and it is in a sustainable location. Additionally, the proposal does not demonstrate that it would detrimentally impact upon the character of the area or neighbouring properties.

Returning to the three objectives of sustainable development, economically the proposed development would enable job creation during the construction period, although this would be very limited given the scale of the development. The inhabitants of the proposed dwelling would also contribute to the local economy through consumer spending. However, given only one dwelling is proposed, this would hold limited weight in the tilted balance. Furthermore, job creation and consumer spending are residual consequences of any housing development.

Regarding the social role, the provision of one new dwelling would make a very small contribution to the borough housing stock. Additionally, the site is located within settlement limits and is well connected to its surroundings. This would hold limited weight in the tilted balance.

Regarding its environmental role, the proposal would have a negative impact upon the built environment by virtue of the convoluted design of the new dwelling and the cramped nature of the plot. Additionally, no landscaping or planting has been proposed as part of this proposal and there would be no improvement of the biodiversity on site. However, as the site is in a sustainable and well-connected location, the environmental performance of the development would likely be neutral.

In engaging the tilted balance, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the scheme significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits when assessed against the framework as a whole.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the application is therefore recommended for **refusal**.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

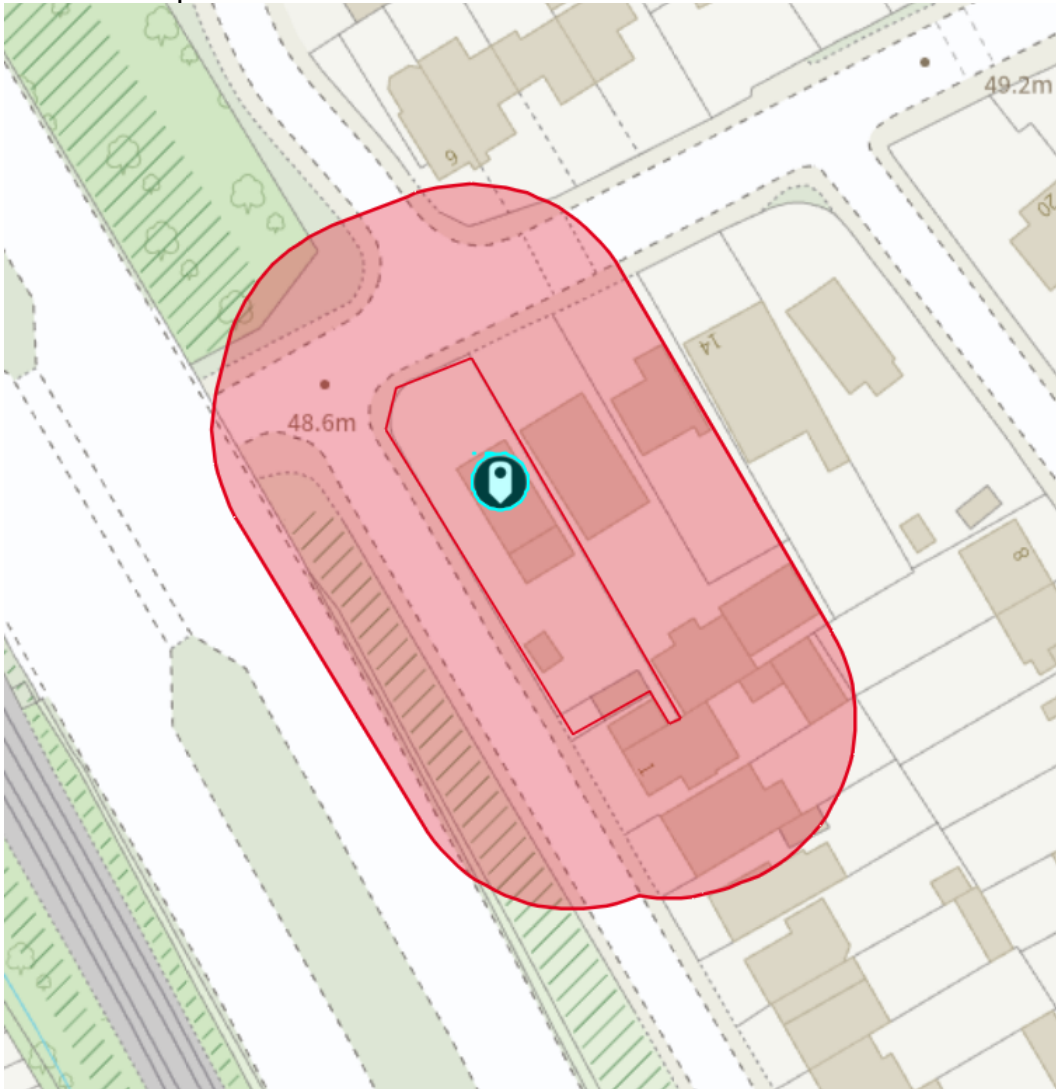
When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	3 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	31 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	3 September 2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

This report is designed to be printed on A4 Portrait (8.27" X 11.69") Paper
Near Me Report



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No legend

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 3

#	NAME
1	Within Major Development Locations
2	Within Major Development Locations
3	Within All Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Major Development Locations	Earley

Mineral Safeguarding Areas | Total count: 2

#	Type	SubType
1	Soft Sand	Construction sand: Palaeogene: Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group, Harwich Formation, London Clay Formation
2	Soft Sand	Construction sand: Palaeogene: Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group, Harwich Formation, London Clay Formation

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: 12km Zone	This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	NO	YES

Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Historic Flood Point	Culver Way

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 4

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
4	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	IRZURL
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=03000000530000&es=&location=473915,172259%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	Thames Water Earley Consultation Zone	Any development

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
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1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay
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Wards | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Earley CP	0 m